

Submission
No 266

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 15 August 2023

Partially
Confidential

Birthed at Hospital April 2023.

Here is what I experienced from Hospital.

26th April - 29 weeks pregnant.

Hospital visit ONE

attended birthing unit at 10:30pm with lower abdominal pain, feeling unwell and tightening's.

Intervention was CTG machine, oral pain medications, urine sample and admission for observation.

Nil beds available in maternity ward, I spent the night in the "half bed birth bed" in the birthing suite.

Multiple times I mentioned I was feeling unwell laying on my back for the CTG, I was not allowed to move intervention was medication to stop me vomiting.

Next morning I let the midwife know I didn't sleep, I felt so unwell, I was having tightenings and feeling faint.

Was told I couldn't move because of the CTG, I was told baby is fine although showing tightening's in ctg and same medication intervention.

I got up and vomited on myself, went to the bathroom in my room and continued to vomit.

Midwife come in and did not offer assistance at all. Stood there and told me to her back into bed. I was in the ground in my vomit, In tears.

Midwife left the room, I went back to bed.

Felt faint and sick during my ultrasound.

Dr came bed side, stated I had a stomach bug, growing pains and braxton hicks and go home and rest. (later it seemd this had been misdiagnosed as later results showed a UTI)

I was still in the same condition as I came to the hospital.

Attended my antenatal appointment 2 weeks later 11th may 2023.

Hospital visit TWO

Midwife said I had a UTI and have had it since I presented to the birth suites.

See attached complaint and response from the hospital.

Hospital visit THREE

36 weeks pregnant I attended the birth unit regarding my thoughts of waters breaking. I lost a-lot of fluid.

A midwife did a stretch and sweep without my consent. I left bleeding and in pain. It was supposed to be a vaginal exam. I felt fingers in the motion of sweeping and stretching. I was sent home. No ctg check. Was not dilated. Told to come back when I'm actually ready and that I've taken up a bed on a busy night.

38 weeks + 6 days. 2nd July 2023

Hospital visit FOUR:

large haemorrhage at 3:30am

Attended birthing unit

1cm dilated

Found large blood clot

Was told I would not be leaving Hospital until baby was born

Drs and midwife's kept me on my back, again I was not allowed to move.

At 10am my waters were broken by a OB as they had concerns for baby and wanted him out. Yet nothing was wrong with my baby.

(I wanted a natural birth) minimal intervention. I listened to the drs and thought ok something must be wrong.

Pitocin started at midday. I was not allowed to move.

Contractions till 4pm.

Dilation 1cm

Lost baby on CTG, intercranel placed without consent. Was told everyone gets it and it needs to happen.

I was in excruciating pain.

I agreed to an epidural.

Became unconscious approx 10 mins after epidural.

Woke up headed to the operating room for a c section.

There was no emergency. Baby was healthy and moving normal on the CTG. They said "he is full term" we are getting him out so there isn't another bleed.

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Without explanation or any full medical reasoning.

They needed the bed I was in they are always bed locked.

I became unconscious briefly again when they topped up the epidural.

Post birth:

My baby was taken away and cleaned when I asked him not to be cleaned. I wasn't allowed to have chest time. They gave him medication I didn't want him to have. I asked for 30mins - 1hr breast time. The checks would be done later.

next day. My first conversation with a dr was "so what contraception are you going to be taking"

How it all affected me:

I also felt extremely violated when the midwife place two of her fingers inside of me and stretched around. I had no explanation for this and it was not a normal vaginal exam I had ever experienced.

After my son was born, I didn't feel like he was my baby. I wanted him to go away, I struggled to connect with him.

What I want for the future of all women birthing in this country"

I want women to be treated with respect and humanely, like they have their own legal rights to make their own medical decisions over their own bodies.

(From 29 weeks I started to feel like just another number. Being only 26, my first full term pregnancy and attending the hospital alone a few times due to my partner being a policeman I felt as though I was not taken seriously, that I was overreacting and annoying. I felt pushed and stood over to make quick decisions. It made me angry every time I had an appointment or hospital trip I was asked "first baby". It constantly brought back miscarriage trauma because this is not my first baby. When I mentioned I worked for NSW ambulance most of the time the midwives' attitude towards me changed. It was more inviting.)

I want an atmosphere of faith in birth, faith in women and the beauty and sacredness of birth.

(I felt fear during the entire day during birth as I was led to believe something was wrong with my son. I feel robbed of my birth experience. I didn't experience labour naturally. I was not simply given the choice.)

What I want post partum:

Post partum I needed better support and follow up. I needed caring, empathetic and counselling support.

(I felt disconnected my first 2 weeks PP. I emotionally struggled to bond with my baby. I mourn because I feel like I did not give birth. I had a baby taken out of me. I am scared to fall pregnant again.)

Post birth at 3:30am when I was bleeding, I was too scared to call because I thought I would not be believed about my blood loss.

My father was treated like royalty before and after a shoulder reconstruction. Why was I treated like an inconvenience?

I still to this day. Do not know why I was induced. Why was I not monitored before medical intervention?

I understand you need to be at a high education level to become a midwife. I would love to be a midwife and I would put 110% into my studies. But because of how hard it is to become one. I simply cannot. My fiancé dropped out of school in year 10, completed around 9 months of study to become a policeman and now carries a deadly weapon. Yet I can't become a midwife because I didn't get a high score in a high school test. If midwifery had not become so medical and had stayed as "beside woman" there would be a place for me in this field. Alternatively I could be a Doula, if the government funded Doulas and recognised Doulas, then a doula could make a decent income and that is a choice I could consider.

We need more midwives, these midwives are overworked and burnt out. I dream for medical intervention to stop being used as a convenience, scare tactic and first resort because the hospital is in bed block and it's an easy route. I would have loved to experience a 36hr natural birth with monitoring. We need a system that SUPPORTS the long, long, long time that MANY women need to have a natural, physiological birth.